

7 June 1974

Dear Major Neale:

I very much appreciate your sending me a copy of your pamphlet on "Racial Unrest in the Army". It is a most interesting reference work that should be provided to all levels of leadership, and by writing it you have made a valuable contribution to promoting better understanding between the races.

Many thanks and with every good wish,

Faithfully,

Vernon A. Walters  
Lieutenant General, USA

Major Larry W. Neale  
Race Relations Officer  
U.S. Army Institute of Administration  
Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana 46216



ATSG-GP

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U. S. ARMY INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION  
FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON, INDIANA 46216

13 May 1974

Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters  
Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear General Walters:

Please accept this complimentary copy of my recently published pamphlet,  
Racial Unrest in the Army, An Examination of Some of the Causes. Since  
the pamphlet focuses on Leadership, I thought you might find some aspects  
of it interesting.

Sincerely,

LARRY W. NEALE  
MAJOR AGC  
Race Relations Officer

1 Incl  
as

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**RACIAL**

**UNREST**

**IN THE**

**ARMY**

**BY**

**MAJOR (P) LARRY W. NEALE**

RACIAL UNREST IN THE ARMY  
AN EXAMINATION OF SOME OF THE CAUSES



Major Neale busy at his desk with expressions of his varied ethnic concerns in the background.

Major Neale's service in the Race Relations/Equal Opportunity field includes the following: Project Manager and Course Director for the Army's new MOS producing Staff Management of Equal Opportunity Programs Course; Race Relations Officer for the United States Army Institute of Administration; designer and principal instructor for a 120 hour Race Relations Training Course for local instructors and facilitators; principal instructor for the Adjutant General School in Race Relations and Equal Opportunity; Major Command Equal Opportunity Officer; Action Officer for selected cases involving alleged discriminatory practices - - Special Actions, The Pentagon.

While the content of this article is of value to all military personnel, it is written primarily for the benefit of officers and noncommissioned officers. For it is this writer's opinion, that while most of the overt racial conflicts take place among lower grade enlisted members, many officers and non-commissioned officers either consciously or unconsciously contribute to racial unrest.

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## INTRODUCTION

A fact which should be obvious to the most casual observer is that during the past 20 years the military establishment has led other institutions in our society in helping to end racially discriminatory practices and in providing for equal treatment and opportunity to servicemen and women irrespective of their race, ethnic origin, or color. However, much remains to be done to eliminate all vestiges of racial discrimination and to insure full equality and treatment for all soldiers.

It appears that the main focus of attention and efforts during the first two decades after the 1948 executive order (*officially ending segregation in the Armed Forces*) were directed toward the process of desegregation and functional integration. While the official policies and directives provided for elimination of racially discriminatory practices and for equal opportunity and treatment for all military personnel, an important aspect of Race Relations may have been overlooked or neglected. That aspect being the active development of better interpersonal relations between members of different racial/ ethnic groups and the promotion of greater racial understanding and awareness.

During the past five to ten years, there have been incidents involving sharp racial tension and

unrest within the military. Even today, relationships between members of different racial and ethnic groups are frequently strained and unrest sometimes results. All military leaders must recognize that this is a potentially explosive area. Therefore, it is mandatory that they NOT become any less concerned about promoting racial harmony and equality at this time, even though progress is being made.

Attitudes and behavior of members of different racial and ethnic groups have changed significantly during the past five to ten years. Some of these changes have caused both overt and subtle friction among soldiers. The attitudinal and behavioral changes along with the general rise of racial tension, make it imperative for all military personnel to exert concentrated efforts toward promoting greater racial understanding, awareness, and harmony.

### PATTERNS OF RACIAL UNREST

The cause and effect relationship of racial unrest within the military is frequently circular in nature. The following illustration depicts this pattern:

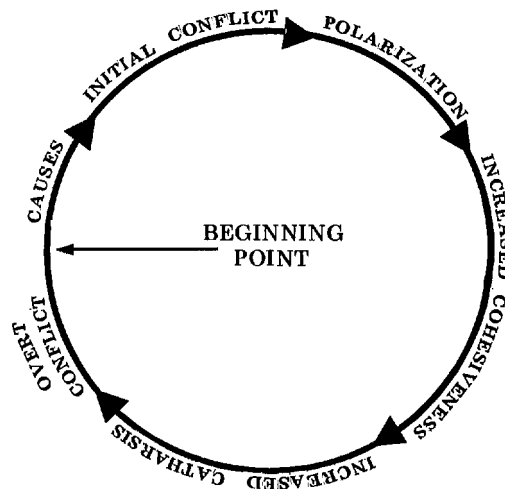
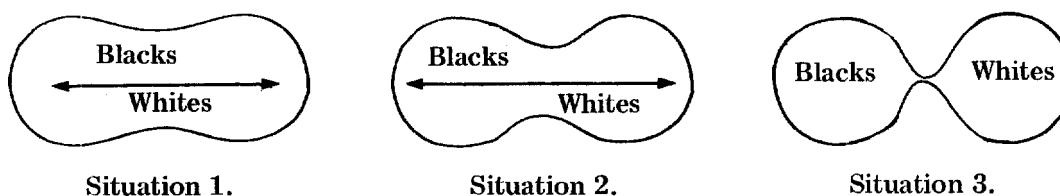


Figure 1. A Cyclical Pattern of Racial Tension and Unrest

Underlying most of the racial problems are some very basic CAUSES illustrated as the initial point on the cyclical pattern. These causes include, but are not limited to, ineffective leadership, ineffective communication, racial prejudice and discrimination, a lack of understanding of the new minority pride, EXTREME militancy, and a lack of understanding the difference between extreme militancy and activism.

The second point on the pattern, INITIAL CONFLICT, can be readily seen through animosity which manifests itself in the form of overt friction between the races. POLARIZATION, as used herein, is the tendency of members of different racial or ethnic groups to separate and regroup or "clan" together strictly because of race or color. Some key factors which cause racial polarization are fear, uncertainty, frustration, and anxiety. Frequently, after an initial conflict involving members of different racial or ethnic groups, some members of each group will voluntarily polarize. These initial groups are usually small, but may rapidly expand. A few hard core members (*those who simply do not desire to have anything to do with individuals of "the other" racial or ethnic*

group) will coerce other members of their own group to separate. As polarization sets in and tension rises, cohesiveness increases within the group. This INCREASED COHESIVENESS can cause a polarized situation to result in a split between the racial groups as the following illustration shows:



#### LEGEND:

Sit #1  $\longleftrightarrow$  = Great amount of association, interaction, and communication.

Sit #2  $\longleftrightarrow$  = A less amount of the above.

Sit #3 = Practically no association, interaction, or communication.

Figure 2. The Pattern of Racial Polarization

As tensions continue to rise and the respective groups solidify, the members of one group will begin to "take on" members of the other group with sharp and harsh verbal assaults. This stage of action is referred to in the diagram as INCREASED CATHARSIS. If and when events advance to this point, the situation is indicative of explosive racial trouble. A major OVERT CONFLICT could be imminent in the form of a group fight, rioting, burning, or the like. At this stage, the situation will have advanced to such a point that "everyone loses."

Too often, and most unfortunately, many officers and noncommissioned officers (*hereafter referred to as military leaders*) only become aware of and concerned about racial problems when overt conflicts take place. It is essential that proper disciplinary action be taken when acts are committed that warrant such. However, it is equally essential for leaders to go to the beginning point on the cyclical pattern and aggressively and fairly attack the CAUSES of the tension or problem. They must equally watch for and react to indicators that racial tension is advancing around the "cyclical pattern" and try to check it at the earliest point possible and not let it advance to OVERT CONFLICT. Leaders must develop a deeper understanding as to the "why" behind racial tension and unrest. An examination of some basic CAUSES is appropriate at this point, especially since they fall in the initial segment of the "cyclical pattern."

### CAUSES OF RACIAL UNREST

#### INEFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

It is probably a characteristic of human nature not to view one's self or one's fellow leaders as constituting a part of the problem. But as implied at the beginning of this article, while most of



the overt physical conflicts do in fact occur among lower grade enlisted personnel, much of the blame for those conflicts must be laid at the feet of some of our military leaders.

Ineffective leadership manifests itself when leaders fail to help soldiers better understand their individual differences; when they fail to develop the genuine interest and concern about effective Race Relations and Equal Opportunity; and when they fail to acquire knowledge and understanding which will enable them to subsequently practice effective human relations. Some leaders show no genuine interest in their subordinates and in many cases are too concerned about themselves and getting their "tickets punched." There are those who will not admit that racial problems exist within their organizations or even within the military at large. Others feel that too much is being done in the area of Race Relations and Equal Opportunity; others feel that "iron discipline and blind obedience" will solve all the problems.

Some leaders render only superficial or cursory support to the military establishment's policies, directives, objectives, and goals which are designed for the specific purpose of bringing about racial harmony and equality in treatment and opportunity. Much of this support is rendered only because these leaders are motivated by fear or incentive. The fear aspect results from leaders' knowing the possibility of reprimand for failure to comply. Fear can also be found in individuals who will do practically anything to keep "scars" off their records so that their success or progress will not be impeded. The incentive aspect is obvious when leaders strive for and expect rewards for their compliance and the "carrying out of proper actions." What we so desperately need more of today is motivation which is morally sound - - where our attitudes, personalities, and habits of thought have a fraternal foundation toward our fellowmen. It is only then that our everyday responses and reactions to the many problems found in this huge arena of Race Relations will make a major contribution to racial harmony.

All military leaders must recognize their total responsibilities and obligations (*both legal and moral*) in Race Relations and Equal Opportunity. They must take the proper interest, become concerned, and gain the knowledge necessary to create the required foundation of understanding which should, in turn, provide them with the impetus to actively promote racial harmony. When military leaders play inadequate or ineffective roles in helping to bring about and maintain mutual trust, understanding, awareness, and equality of opportunity and treatment, they must be considered as causing or at least helping to perpetuate "the problem." This should not be tolerated.

Effective leadership includes obtaining the confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation of subordinates, as well as showing a personal interest in each man. Many youth entering the service today participated in or were subjects of racial conflicts in civilian life, or faced the old problem of encountering many social injustices. Further, there are rising expectations and aspirations by members of minority groups which include the pursuit of greater social justice. Therefore, the leaders of today must not only command by virtue of their position, but must lead their men by skillful use of the vital techniques of managing human differences.

In managing human differences, the leaders should identify and relate the structural (*or organizational*) factors to those pertaining to the individuals - - the human factors. After this relationship is made, they should then be able to direct or influence behavior and attitudes by putting emphasis on the appropriate factors. This emphasis must be in proper proportion so as to result in accomplishing the overall objectives set for fostering racial harmony. A scale depicting this writer's concept of the aforementioned explanation is presented on the following page.

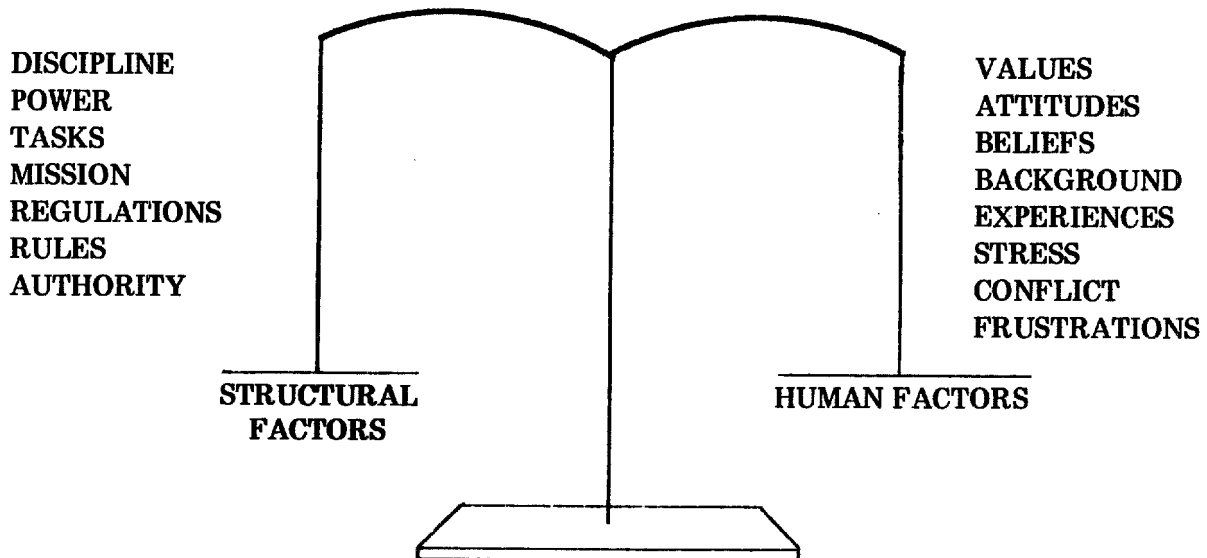


Figure 3. Scale of Forces in Managing Human Differences

At times, leaders may have one-sided views of the total factors which have an impact on their leadership role. A skillful blending of the structural and human factors is necessary to effectively manage today's soldiers.

Immediate and devoted attention must be given by leaders to the racial issues and problems within the military. Race Relations should not be permitted to deteriorate beyond its present point. Leaders must examine their own attitudes and behavior for any negative factors regarding promoting harmonious Race Relations and insuring equal opportunity and treatment. They must also influence behavior of subordinates as necessary to bring about and maintain harmony between members of the different racial and ethnic groups. Any leader who refuses to accept this challenge is not worthy of the rank, trust, and/or responsibility which he or she holds.

There are several elements of leadership that are essential in promoting better racial harmony among our servicemen. This writer views these elements within leadership blocks as follows:

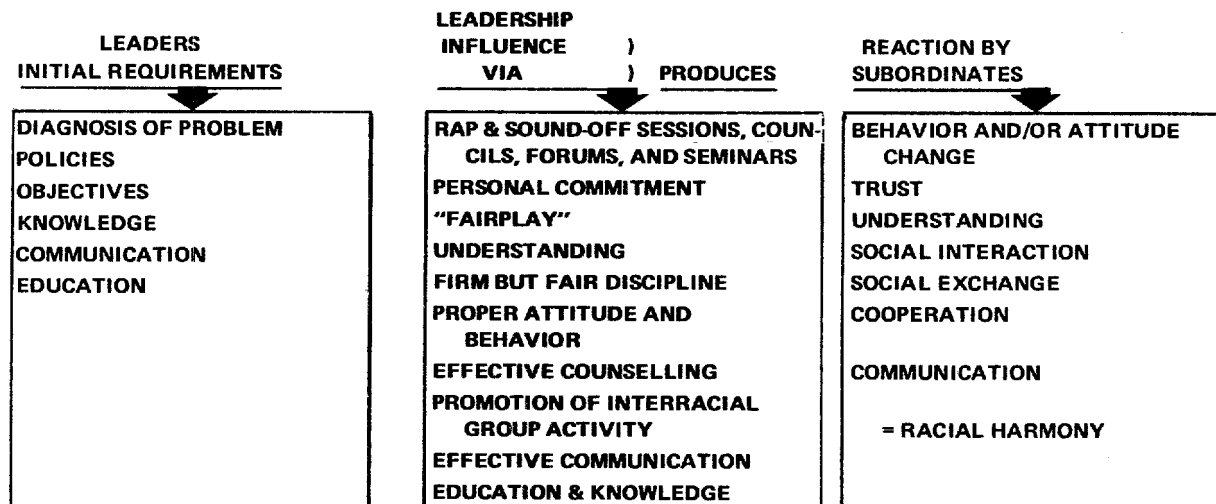


Figure 4. Leadership Blocks to Promote Better Human Relations

## INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Military leaders must improve communications between themselves and their subordinates. They must first set the example and foster an atmosphere within their organizations where communication can flow easily. Effective communication can bring about better understanding and improved Race Relations.

Individuals have varying types of personalities and have encountered different kinds of experiences which will cause many of them to be reluctant to readily communicate - particularly with superiors. It is not enough for a leader to say, "I've always had an open door policy and all my subordinates know it; anyone with a racial problem or who knows of one can walk right in to see me." There are many barriers to effective communication and each leader must recognize those in his particular environment or situation. The racial issue, being a very sensitive subject to many people, is frequently withheld from discussion even if an average amount of communication takes place. Therefore, the leader must make a special effort to recognize and remove those barriers which hinder improvement of communication and thereby restrict the fostering of better Race Relations.

There are many steps a leader can take to help overcome communication obstacles. For the purpose of this writing, only the primary steps will be discussed. He should always try to make himself accessible so that subordinates can feel free to talk with him, and so that he can observe and listen to present or potential problems. When there is a complaint or grievance, he should respond quickly and fairly; otherwise, the individual furnishing the information will be reluctant to do likewise on subsequent occasions. If there is a climate of distrust, the leader should work toward eliminating it. He should always keep his subordinates informed and insure that communication coming up the chain of command and going down is clear and not misinterpreted.

Soldiers must be able to express their racial complaints and concerns without fear of reprisal or retaliation from superiors. Within reason, subordinates should be encouraged to speak out. Also, leaders at all levels must not be afraid to inform their superiors when they encounter a racial problem or situation which they experience difficulty in handling. This does not necessarily reflect an inability of the person to lead, command, or manage. The worst action by the leader is to allow the situation to go unattended or allow it to lie and smother for days, weeks, or months until one day it explodes into violence.

During informal contacts with subordinates, the leaders should discuss ideas, suggestions, gripes, and feelings regarding Race Relations. Such discussions should not be designed to circumvent the normal military chain of command or the established policies and procedures. But in many instances, these informal discussions, initiated by leaders, are necessary and will reveal the true "pulse" or feelings of individuals within their organizations; for there are too many leaders who will tell "the old man" only what they want him to hear.

Greater emphasis at unit level should be placed on Race Relations seminars to allow the servicemen and women the opportunity to discuss racial problems. Many individuals who would not otherwise discuss the racial problem will express their feeling during such seminars. The seminars should not be designed as occasional "show pieces" but must be strongly encouraged and supported by the leaders and have mandatory participation up and down the chain of command.

Frequently, leaders who are confronted with a grievance or complaint about an actual or perceived racial problem only partially listen to what the complainant is saying. There are two common situations where partial listening takes place. First, the leader might feel that he is too busy with "other matters" to spend time listening to racial grievances. The second occurs when the leader is intentionally or unintentionally emotionally involved in the racial issue. Through interpretation and understanding of this latter point, one can envision what could happen if a leader holds certain negative attitudes and beliefs regarding racial or ethnic groups.

His attitudes and beliefs may be such that he does not want to accept any information which goes against his thoughts concerning the matter. This individual will quickly build up defenses and readily point out "a hundred reasons why" the grievance or complaint is probably not valid. He gives attention only to those ideas he wants to hear which usually support his position. This "partial listening" is a distinct barrier to improving communication and understanding.

Another important aspect in fostering better communication is for the leader to practice empathy while hearing a complaint. Here the leader must be able to listen in such a way as to put himself in the other person's place - - to attempt to feel his feelings and to realize his experiences. To be able to do this effectively, however, one must be knowledgeable and aware of the human relation aspects of individual differences and the significance of one's experiential background.

### RACIAL PREJUDICE

Differences in backgrounds, family attitudes, teachings, and beliefs are the basis for racial biases which are usually firmly rooted by the time the individual enters the military service. Some individuals are able to control their prejudices under certain supervised conditions, so as not to prevent them from abiding by military directives and regulations. Other prejudiced individuals, however, overtly or covertly exhibit their negative racial behavior during duty hours and/or after duty hours.

It is fitting at this point to seek some understanding of the environmental and sociological factors which contribute to the formation of prejudice. Prejudice does not come about by heredity, but is acquired, usually during childhood with the parents being primary teachers. It may also be acquired in part in the schools, churches, or in the communities in general. For example, some children develop an unjustified dislike which often leads to strong negative attitudes, as well as antipathy, toward members of a particular racial or ethnic group. Some parents, teachers, and leaders are more subtle in their teachings than others. Consciously or unconsciously, they display negative feelings through their expressions and reactions. This series of examples is by no means complete, but is intended to show that factors and situations which influence the formation of prejudice do vary.

Regardless of the nature and causes of racial prejudices, we can be assured that they are usually deep-rooted and interwoven into many military personnel's belief systems. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that some military personnel do have negative racial attitudes and behavior which must be dealt with.

### RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Racial discrimination is closely related to prejudice. This is not to say, however, that everyone who discriminates against a person or group is racially prejudiced; nor is it appropriate to say that everyone who is racially prejudiced discriminates. There are different views about the degree of discrimination within the military. It will be argued by some that many minorities perceive discrimination where none actually exists. While this is true in some instances, it is essential that the focus of military leaders not be dimmed to the point where complaints and grievances are overlooked or not properly investigated. Therefore, each allegation of racial discrimination should be thoroughly investigated at all levels by a competent person (*or persons*) and let the facts determine the truth. The intent here is to emphasize the need for thoroughness of investigations - - of all allegations, at all military levels.

### LACK OF UNDERSTANDING THE NEW MINORITY PRIDE

A new or increased racial identity and solidarity have grown among several minorities during the past five to ten years. Some people call this occurrence a new awareness, mood, or pride. Irrespective of the labels, these minorities are proud of their race or ethnic group, and cultural heritage. There is also a sharp increase in their personal pride and pride in publicly identifying with their own cultural group. Due to a gross lack of understanding of this new awareness and the ways by which it is manifested, many members of the majority group frequently find it a source of friction or irritation. The most obvious of this awareness, especially as seen in the military, is that found among Blacks and, therefore, will be discussed in greater depth.

The new pride of Blacks of the mid-60's to the present cannot be adequately comprehended without a brief retrospective view of the black man's self-image in previous years and an examination of acceptance of one's social status as a form of adjustment to it. For centuries a large segment of the black American population tolerated and in some cases, accepted many stereotypes set by Whites. A large number of Whites treated Blacks as intellectually and genetically inferior. This perception, or degrees of it, became the self-image of many Blacks. With too few exceptions, the general result was a negative, inadequate self-concept. Hair, skin color, and several physical features in general were perceived as "bad" by many Blacks even before they reached public school age. Society as a whole must share the blame for creating the conditions which led to the Blacks' acceptance of this social status. In many instances, the lack of adequate education and social isolation allowed the black man's forced inferior status to go unchallenged by him for a long period of time.

As social mobility was achieved by some Blacks, negative attitudes toward one's own group were still evident in some cases; but as the years passed, the negative self-concept was cast aside. Changes in the negative attitudes of Blacks can be seen in their new personal pride. Today the afro hair stylings and cosmetics for Blacks are but a few ways in which this new self-concept is portrayed. No longer do they view their skin color and hair as "bad" or "ugly." It should be pointed out that, in spite of the aforementioned factors, some Blacks have always had a very positive self-image.

In turn, the Black's new self-image led to a healthier esteem of his race as a whole. Holding high regard for his own cultural group, he therefore developed the desire to identify with, rather than reject, his own race. Out of the new pride in affiliating with his cultural group grew a spirit of collective responsibility to that group. Consequently, we have a "new" black man and woman with new levels of achievement and generally higher levels of expectation and aspiration than in the past. He is a proud black man and a proud, beautiful black woman. It is, therefore, with the foregoing comprehension that we must view the black man and woman in our military ranks today.

Attempts by the military to promulgate this recently acquired pride by many Blacks and their racial identity are noteworthy in some areas. However, recognizing these factors without adequately promulgating the meaning and full significance of the same has led to misunderstanding on the part of many Whites.

Frequently exercised as a form of the new racial identity is a "closeness" by members of different ethnic groups. This expression of brotherhood by Blacks has been viewed by many Whites with fear, resentment, and a general dislike of what they call "clannishness." It is suggested that Blacks, even with their new racial pride, exhibit no greater tendency to affiliate than any other racial, ethnic, or cultural group. Further, it would be unjust not to point out that, irrespective of the social and psychological factors involved, Blacks from slavery days until recent years have been forced together, a situation that exists even today in some areas of our country.

Military leaders should avoid overreacting to the sight of a group of individuals of one racial or ethnic group associating together. They must be careful not to hastily label such an occurrence

as "polarization or separation" - - be they Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Indians, or Orientals.

Another point which needs attention is that a large number of majority group members do not understand the need or desire of Blacks for extending greetings with the solidarity handshake; or having Afro Sheen in the PX, hamhocks in the commissary, and literature relating specifically to Blacks in the libraries; the wearing of natural hair stylings and slave bracelets; or the wearing of off-duty Afro-American dress such as the dashiki and kaba. The new racial identity, pride, and solidarity is not an "overnight fad." Military leaders must first understand it and, second, attempt to appreciate it - - not merely tolerate it. It should be pointed out that this new awareness is also becoming increasingly evident among Chicanos and Indians, in addition to Blacks.

### MILITANCY AND A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MILITANCY AND ACTIVISM

Since society consists of people of all races with a variety of views and feelings, it is reasonable to assume that some individuals with extreme militant or radical views regarding race enter the military. Thus, in attempting to understand militancy as a cause of racial unrest, one must understand what militancy is, the degrees of militancy, what activism is, and consider a "frustration-aggression" hypothesis as a basic cause of militancy. In considering militancy, mislabeling and misinterpretation frequently take place. All too often, the socially frustrated minority member, in pursuit of equal treatment and equal opportunity, is loosely labeled as an extreme militant or radical and, consequently, misinterpreted.

It must first be recognized that, contrary to commonly used definitions and stereotyped beliefs, militancy does not necessarily mean "taking up arms" or conducting oneself in some overt hostile manner. It can be an aggressive, fighting spirit for what one believes is right. A common error is a failure to separate the extremist from the activist. Some individuals only see the conservative and the extremist, with no one in between. The following illustration is the writer's view depicting some minorities as related to patterns of behavior regarding social justice and social change:

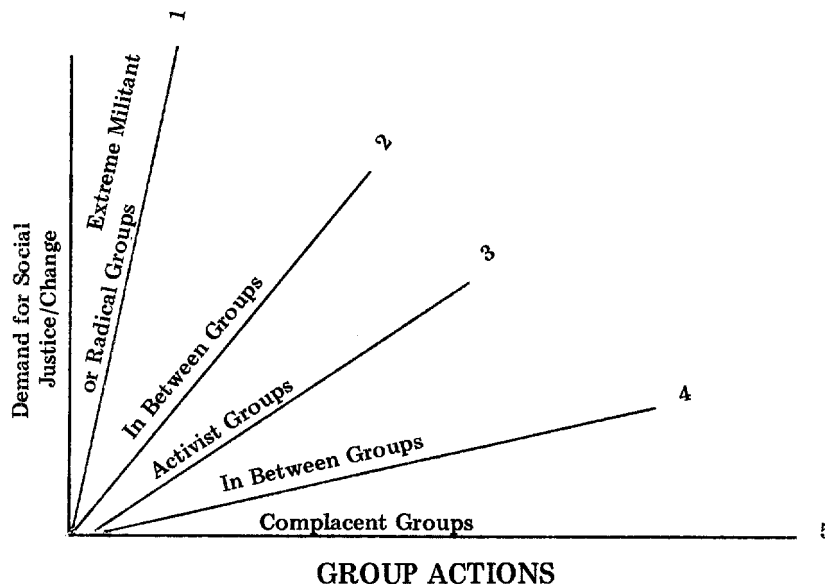


Figure 5. Angles of Approach to Social Change/Justice

The following paragraphs (1 - 5) are keyed to the Illustration on page 9.

1 - Extremist groups. Frequently use extralegal means to seek social change or social justice. Goals and objectives are more extreme and/or radical than other groups shown. An example would be a group who believes the only way to bring about change is the destruction of a racial group.

2 - In-between groups. Generally demand social change and justice within the system, but may sometimes be influenced to take radical actions; however, not to the extent of those in line 1. An example is a person(s) influenced to participate in a civil disturbance involving destruction of property.

3 - Activist groups. Demand social change and justice within the system. Will use all official means within the established system to accomplish this end. Believe in making injustices known to the others, including those in authority. An example is a peaceful protest group or a group demanding to deliver grievances to the "top man."

4 - In-between groups. Generally do not become involved in demanding social change or justice, unless involved in personal situations or confrontations.

5 - The status quo, conservative, spectator, complacent groups. Generally do nothing to help bring about social change or justice.

Like this writer, most individuals realize that overt violence should not be condoned. However, some insight into general conditions that foster such aggression is vital to one's understanding in this regard. Therefore, it is appropriate here to examine frustration and aggression to some degree.

Many new enlistees and draftees enter the military service with a history of frustrating experiences from society. In some cases, the sudden change of environment merely increases frustration. This is particularly true of those who come from the crowded slums and from poverty-ridden rural areas of our society. Immediately prior to entering the service, many servicemen live amidst degrading conditions. Some live in homes and communities that breed feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and despair. Therefore, it is only logical that some persons enter the service feeling frustrated, depressed, or angry. It must be realized that persons in this state of mind are easily led to conflict. In many instances this conflict has racial overtones. These individuals are often tense and uneasy. They find themselves in an environment that is different in many respects from the one they knew. They are suspicious and need both security and identity.

Many officers and enlisted men do not relate to such conditions or feelings as described above - some because they lack adequate knowledge and understanding of this area of human misery, others because they lack interest or concern. It is essential, however, that the nature and effects of poverty be understood in order to truly lead and manage men with their individual differences.

### CONCLUSION

Racial unrest in the military stems from many sources; its effects are varied, and there is no single solution to the problem. Attaining and maintaining racial harmony within the military requires the dedication of all its members, with the leaders playing the dominant role. Ineffective leadership is one of the most damaging elements in achieving and maintaining harmonious Race Relations. Social responsibilities are a vital part of the overall leadership role. Today, there is a need for a deep and involved commitment by all members of the military to the racial issue, with leaders setting the example.

Awareness and understanding are also essential in attempting to alter any aspect of human

behavior. These elements must be present in relationships involving subordinates, peers, and superiors.

The Military is a unique institution in our society. Due to its structure, it is ideally suited for the role of "national integrator." While it is realized that the primary role of the military is for the defense and/or security of this nation, as a major institution in our society, it can play a vital role in helping to bring about worthy social change. The military's record of leading other institutions in its efforts to eliminate racial injustices shows that it can be a primary contributor to such worthy change. While not sacrificing the military's primary mission, a strong sense of urgency must continue to be directed toward shaping and changing individual patterns of behavior, with the ultimate goal of bringing about better Race Relations.